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Agenda item 7

DRAFT REPORT OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL PREPARATORY COMMITTEE ON ITS FIRST SESSION

New York, 24 - 28 July 2000

Rapporteur: Mr. R. T. Dogani (United Republic of Tanzania)

Addendum

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Chapter I

SUBSTANTIVE PREPARATIONS FOR THE CONFERENCE

(Agenda item 3)

6 (a) Review of progress in the preparatory process for the Conference

1. The **Executive Secretary of the Conference** said that, with regard to regional-level preparations, three expert-level preparatory meetings had been held in Addis Ababa for English-speaking African LDCs (27-29 March), in Kathmandu for the Asia and Pacific LDCs (3-5 April) and in Niamey for French-speaking African LDCs and Haiti (18-20 April). The meetings had reviewed progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the 1990s and other substantive issues. With regard to global-level preparations, the major concern was how to succeed in the area of advocacy and publicity; support for the commitments to be negotiated must be secured in advance with different constituents. Ownership of the process should be encouraged for both LDCs and their development partners, who also needed to create national preparatory mechanisms to secure support for the global commitments to be adopted at the Conference. With regard to inter-agency consultations, the third Inter-agency Meeting, held on 20 July in New York, had identified areas where agencies could make contributions. The indicative thematic and/or sectoral topics included: governance, peace and stability; the challenge of financing growth and development in LDCs; overcoming marginalization and enhancing LDCs' productive capacities through trade and investment; and enhancing programme implementation and performance through the establishment of an operational link between the global Programme of Action and the country-level programmes of action.

2. The third Consultative Forum, held in New York on 21 July, had provided a medium for interfacing and consensus-building between United Nations bodies and other stakeholders. The importance of advocacy and the need for adequate financing for the preparatory process had been emphasized at the Forum.

3. The LDC III secretariat was also reaching out to civil society, including non-governmental organizations and the private sector. The Liaison Committee for Development NGOs to the European Union would be the focal point and the convenor of NGO activities for the Third United Nations Conference on LDCs. An NGO steering group composed of European NGO network and Belgium umbrella NGOs was currently finalizing different aspects of NGO activities which would take place as parallel events during the LDC III Conference. An NGO Forum taking place in New York from 24 to 26 July was considering possible NGO activities and assignments.

4. With regard to advocacy and promotion for the Conference, the LDC III secretariat and DPI had elaborated a strategy to mobilize grass-roots involvement, build confidence, and increase public awareness to mobilize greater support. The Secretary-General of the Conference had requested the UN Postal Administration to issue a special stamp for LDC III.

5. Consultations with the Government of Belgium and the European Commission had been launched with the visit of the Secretary-General of the Conference to the President of the European Commission in May, and views had been exchanged on policy and strategic aspects of the Conference.

6. Finally, in line with General Assembly resolution 52/187, the Secretary-General of the Conference had made every effort to raise extrabudgetary resources for the preparatory process. To date, support had been secured from the European Commission, Belgium, Finland, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden and the Holy See. One third of the required total of US$ 16 million had been secured, and additional financial support was needed urgently.

7. The **Secretary of the Conference** presented the proposed structure and scenario for the Conference. He noted that the Conference would consist of two tracks, namely an intergovernmental track and a civil society track incorporating such components as: (a) the Committee of the Whole, which would be negotiating the text of the Programme of Action; (b) a series of interactive debates aimed at creating added value; (c) parallel events; (d) general statements broadcast on the Internet; and (e) exhibition and pavilions. With regard to the interactive debate, he indicated the proposed themes and the preparatory activities involved. He emphasized the linkages and potential synergies between the interactive debates, the parallel events, and the work of the Committee of the Whole. He also indicated the proposed nature of the NGO forum and how it was proposed to link up the forum with the proceedings at the Conference itself.

8. The **representative of the European Community** said that the Community had participated in all the Consultative Forum meetings and would host LDC III in the European Parliament and the NGO Forum in the Charlemagne building. Logistical preparations had begun following the visit to Brussels of the Secretary-General of the Conference, and the Commission needed to know whether the Preparatory Committee would accept the proposals relating to the structure and the organizational format of the Conference before proceeding on details. He urged LDCs to show early interest in participating in the exhibitions and indicated that funds to defray the participation of NGOs, the press and exhibitors from LDCs had been secured. At the same time as those efforts to make the Conference at the EC Brussels headquarters successful was going ahead, the EC delegations in the LDCs were contributing to national and regional LDC preparations for the bottom-up process proposed by UNCTAD. In this context the EC was co-funding the creation of the national support bodies and the contracting of national experts in charge of establishing the national programmes of action for the LDCs.

9. The **representative of Belgium** said this was the first time that a body of member States (the EU) was hosting a United Nations Conference. This unique circumstance brought with it issues of access to territory, hospitality, protocol and security, some of which were solely in the domain of Belgian territorial jurisdiction. Belgium would extend hospitality to dignitaries, host national events and welcome participants from NGOs and the press, and it would make further financial contributions to the preparatory process as needs were identified.

10. The **representative of Angola** asked what concrete steps had been taken by the secretariat to bridge the resource gap referred to by the Executive Secretary of the Conference. The proposal on a global new deal challenged Governments to enter into specific commitments.

11. The **representative of the European Union** found the structural and organizational proposals for LDC III to be generally acceptable. The European Union hoped for concrete, functional, action-oriented, measurable and adaptable outcomes. The primary ownership of the process by LDCs, working with their partners, could be demonstrated through the submission of country programmes of action, and the broad participation expected at the Conference, especially of civil society, could be translated into concrete and realistic initiatives.

12. The **representative of Bangladesh** urged the Conference to match the outcome of the Conference with its design. The outcome of the Asian regional group's consultation had already been taken into account in the national-level programmes of action which were before the Committee. The post-Brussels paradigm should address core issues in a concrete manner. He was concerned at the level of resources raised thus far and feared that preparations might be compromised. The required resources should be provided by donors before the question was addressed again at the next session of the General Assembly.

13. The **representative of Brazil**, while welcoming the progress made in the preparatory process, reminded the Committee of the credibility challenge that lay ahead of the international community and urged concrete responses to the major issues raised in the reports before the Committee. A successful outcome must be ensured, and the broad-based Conference design being proposed could be complemented by South-South approaches.

14. The **representative of the Central African Republic** welcomed the statements of the European Community, Belgium and the European Union. He hoped that the content and outcome of LDC III would take full account of fundamental developments since 1980. General information on LDC III arrangements, including arrangements for high-level attendance, would facilitate effective LDC participation.

15. The **Secretary-General of the Conference** said South-South cooperation arrangements were under serious consideration, as most developing countries belonged to common regional and subregional groupings. Those arrangements could, therefore, prove very useful in the areas of trade, investment and technical assistance. He stressed the importance of raising adequate funds to facilitate LDC participation.

16. The **representative of Nepal** urged that LDC III be a conference with a difference. The focus on the marginalization of LDCs in the process of globalization and the goodwill towards them should be converted into concrete actions in the new Programme of Action. He wondered whether the Conference should focus on a few salient areas or address a broad cluster of themes. Ensuring early financial support needed urgent attention, and the institutional arrangements for intergovernmental and secretariat follow-up also needed to be considered. Ultimately, as stated by the Secretary-General of the Conference, the international community would be judged by how it treated its most vulnerable group.

17. The **representative of the United Republic of Tanzania** appreciated the innovative character of the Conference, particularly the participatory approach to it. This marked a departure from the approach taken at the previous conferences, and therein lay its in-built insurance of broad support and success. The outcome of the assessment of the Programme of Action for the 1990s should feed into the overall mobilization of support for the Conference. He further stressed the need for early convergence of the governmental and non-governmental inputs into the Programme of Action. A mechanism for achieving this – from the parallel processes – needed clear articulation.

18. The **representative of South Africa** recalled the many problems that LDCs faced and that had led to their increasing marginalization. The Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Group of 77 and China, and the Organization of African Unity had presented a common position to the G-8 meeting in Okinawa on the external indebtedness of developing countries and the need to eradicate poverty. South Africa supported efforts to improve the socio-economic situation of LDCs and within the framework of SADC was working on a free trade agreement in Southern Africa which would recognize different levels of development and be asymetrical in favour of the less developed.

19. The **representative of UNESCO** supported the idea of thematic debates which were action and results-oriented.